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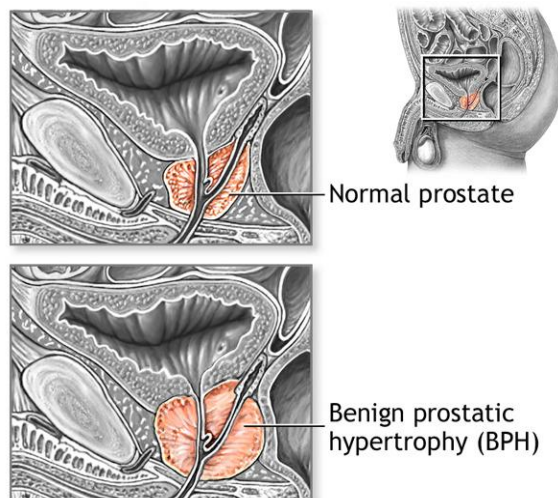
## Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia: An Overview

### What is Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia?

**Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)** is the noncancerous enlargement of the prostate. BPH is more common in men as they age. Studies suggest this growth of the prostate occurs as a result of changes in hormones.

The prostate is the gland that produces the liquid found in sperm. It surrounds the **urethra** (the channel that carries urine from the body). Thus, when the prostate enlarges, it presses on the urethra and causes blockage of urine.

As men age, they may also have an overgrowth of the muscles around the prostate. These muscles tighten and press on the urethra, contributing to the blockage of urine.



### What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms of BPH include:

- Slowed or delayed urine stream.
- Urinating a lot at night.
- A strong urge to urinate.
- Pain when urinating.
- Blood in the urine.

## What Tests Will I Need?

Your doctor will examine you and ask about your symptoms. A urine test may be done to look for infection and/or x-rays of the prostate.

Other tests include:

- **Digital rectal examination.** Because the prostate is near the rectum, the doctor will feel for any changes by inserting a gloved finger into the rectum.
- **Urine flow study.** You will be asked to urinate into a device that measures how quickly the urine flows.
- **Cystoscopy.** This is the insertion of a thin tube into the urethra and bladder so the doctor can get a better view of the prostate.
- **Prostate-specific antigen (PSA).** This is a substance secreted by prostate cells, used in diagnosing cancer. Your doctor may do this to rule out cancer.

## How is BPH Treated?

Many treatments are available. Some require surgery and others do not. Treatments include:

- **Medication.** Some common medications relax the muscles around the prostate. Others suppress the action of the male hormone and shrink the prostate. Some patients obtain relief from symptoms with the use of herbal products such as saw palmetto.
- **Stents.** A stent is any material used to hold tissue in place. Stents are sometimes inserted through the urethra to keep the urinary channel open.
- **Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP).** This is a procedure to remove the obstructing part of the prostate using a **resectoscope**. This is a viewing scope with a cutting tool to remove tissue. In some cases, the doctor may insert a scope and tools through the urethra that apply heat from an electric current, laser beam energy, or high-frequency waves. These tools melt or vaporize prostate tissue.
- **Transurethral incision of the prostate (TUIP).** The doctor inserts a tool through the urethra to cut the muscle in the area where the bladder meets the prostate. The opening to the bladder then relaxes, improving urine flow.
- **Simple prostatectomy.** This is a procedure to cut-away and remove the obstructing portion of the prostate, in most cases through an abdominal **incision** (surgical cut). It is done when the prostate is too big to treat with other surgical methods.

There are other ways to treat BPH. Talk to your doctor about the treatments available and which one would be best for you.